

Mayor Don Keil's Mayor's Message for April 2015

Successful cities require effective communication between their citizens and the city government. Over just the past few years, communication has taken many different forms, methods, gadgets, and purposes.

It's important that the communication be 2-way: City to Public, and Public to City.

Let's talk about City to public first.

One of my biggest frustrations since becoming mayor has been about communicating the city's message to the citizenry about what the city government is doing, and/or planning to do.

Much of that frustration was relieved last year when we brought back the position of Public Information Officer (PIO), and hired Scott Packard to fill the slot. Scott was blessed with youth, energy, great TV reporting skills, and that all-important skill set – social media savvy.

All of a sudden, our communications truly joined the digital age, and information was flying out at mega speed. City project updates, meetings, press releases, proclamation signings, ribbon cuttings, and community events of every sort were being exposed to the public through the newspapers, radio, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and our improved website. What a change! Weren't those monthly city update videos great? The newspapers and radio were never fed so much information at such a rate.

I'm referring to all this in the past tense because Scott has been hired away to a job in his hometown of Galveston.

If it seems like the city has slowed down in the past few weeks, it hasn't. It's because Scott is not here pouring out the information.

I have a dual purpose in writing this. The first reason is to let you, the public, know what is happening. Business is moving apace – as fast or faster than ever. We're just not able to get all the information out as before. The second reason is to advertise the position, in hopes that a qualified applicant or someone who knows a qualified applicant will read this and respond. We really need a new PIO ASAP!

Now - a bit about Public to City.

I think it is imperative that the public communicates its needs to the city government. This especially applies to me. I need to know what is going on out there – good or bad. I think face-to-face is the best way to do this, so I make as many community events as I possibly can.

If you see me in public, please approach me if you would like to discuss something, or have a question about something. I might not be able to offer any details immediately, but I can make notes, or schedule a meeting, and get together with you at a convenient

time. It's difficult to discuss anything in great detail while in public with crowd noise and music playing, but it's a good way to initiate something.

Also, you can email me directly at dkeil@seguintexas.gov with any questions, concerns or comments. You can also telephone my assistant Lisa Trevino at City Hall at 401-2445, and leave a message, and I will call you back. Lisa can also give information about how to contact your city councilman or other city official. You can also use the ultimate form of communicating with council – testifying at a city council meeting.

In most cases, I will return your emails or calls as soon as possible. However, there are two exceptions.

The first exception is that there are times when I will lose or miss-file something, or just plain forget – I am human.

The second exception is if you are what I call a “special” person. A “special” person is someone with whom I have met repeatedly, returned multiple emails and phone calls, and regardless of my answer or reaction, still remains relentlessly negative about virtually anything done by city government. They then will broadcast their negativity out on social media. To them I say, “Bless your heart”.

To all of you citizens out there that truly have legitimate problems, complaints, or even compliments, I need to hear from you. I invite you to contact me. I may not have all the answers, and I may not give you the answers you want to hear, but I will answer you.

And to all those “special” people out there - Bless your heart.

Gosh, I love this town!